

## A Message from the President of the Youngstown Columbiana Association of REALTORS®

### 6 TIPS FOR SENIORS TO MAKE DOWNSIZING EASIER

By, Dennis Gonatas

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Downsizing often makes sense for seniors whose needs no longer match their present home.

When retirement nears, downsizing often makes good financial sense. It can help you make the most of a fixed income. Likewise, it means less time and money spent on maintenance.

It can also be safer. For example, many older homes have stairs that become a nuisance over time. They might also have large tubs or other amenities that are no longer desirable.

Downsizing the right way can help seniors achieve a more relaxed, sustainable lifestyle. With fewer things to worry about, they have more time to focus on what matters.

Here's how to make the process simpler:

#### 1. **Start Decluttering Early**

You can't be sure exactly what you'll be able to bring to a new living space until you know its measurements. Still, you can get started de-cluttering by getting rid of items you know you no longer want. This could include unused appliances or electronics and old clothes, for example. This allows you to donate items or give them to family and friends without having to rush.

#### 2. **Set Your New Home Goals**

When you move into a new space, you have some fantastic opportunities. You can move closer to friends and family, take advantage of dining and shopping, or make it easier to take care of chores like doctor appointments. It's also a good idea to build a budget so you can narrow down your home selections to those that will allow you to meet all your financial requirements.

#### 3. **Talk to a Real Estate Agent**

Working with a good real estate agent is an essential part of downsizing successfully. You want an agent who understands your goals and works with you. An agent will accelerate the process and help you get a price you're comfortable with at the same time. Since it

may take a while for the right home to be on the market, it's a good idea to touch base with an expert early.

#### 4. **Consider Safety and Convenience**

Mobility and maintenance become bigger factors as a homeowner ages. When you begin looking at prospective homes, ensure you are not setting yourself up for inconvenience down the line. Make sure you have at least one step-free entrance into the home, with access to all you need on the first level, and halls and doorways broad enough to move through comfortably.

#### 5. **Set Clear Dates for Your Move**

Without setting a final date for your move, it's all too easy for it to slide down the priority list. It's a good idea to have a firm idea exactly when you expect to be gone. From there, you can set smart goals for each week, like creating your household budget or going through one room of your current home. With small, manageable steps like this, you can go a very long way.

#### 6. **Give Yourself Time to Let Go**

Not everything you do while decluttering and moving will be fun. Many people find the process a little upsetting, even if they only get rid of things they no longer want or need. The truth is, this is natural. Your belongings and space may have a lot of sentimental value. Don't rush: Take time to enjoy and say goodbye in a way that works for you. Perhaps a family get-together?

It may be a bit of a production, but downsizing can make things more comfortable and less expensive. With the right real estate agent in your corner, you may find yourself moving into a "downsized" home that's your favorite one yet.

*Dennis Gonatas is the 2022 President of the Youngstown Columbiana Association of REALTORS®*